

The Colorado Department of Agriculture Announces Request for Proposals for the 2013 Noxious Weed Management Fund Grants

The Colorado Department of Agriculture (CDA) is accepting proposals for grants funded by CDA's Noxious Weed Management Fund for the 2013 field season. Application materials must be mailed or e-mailed to CDA. Proposals are due February 22, 2013, by 5 P.M. All signatures are required at the time of submittal.

Program Objectives

The primary objective of the CDA Noxious Weed Management Fund (WMF) grant program is to provide additional financial resources to counties, communities, weed control districts, or other entities engaged in cooperative efforts to eradicate and/or contain state, regionally, or locally rare, noxious weed species populations and to prevent the spread of high priority weed populations. Organized private interests as well as public agencies and local governments may apply for assistance provided that awarded funds will be used for weed management efforts within the State of Colorado.

Funding

With CDA's limited funding for WMF projects – this year's proposed level is in the neighborhood of \$200,000 – our top priority is for proposals that address eradication of List A species. Proposals that primarily address List A species but also include eradication efforts for List B species designated for elimination in your county are included in this top priority. This year we are also soliciting proposals for List B pilot projects (see below). Proposals must have a management orientation.

Priority of Project Areas

<u>Early Detection and Eradication of List A Species</u>. CDA strongly encourages timely management responses to threats posed by infestations of noxious weeds that are found in discrete and manageable populations – the state's List A species. Immediate containment of known populations, intensive surveys of surrounding areas or susceptible lands, and initiation of multi-year eradication efforts should be the achievable goals of such proposals. For ongoing List A eradication projects, goals and objectives must address a plan and timeline for eradication.

Eradication of List B species populations that are designated for eradication. Projects that address List A species exclusively will be given top priority. However, if List B species populations designated for elimination can be treated efficiently along with the List A species, such projects are also a high priority. As indicated in the Rules Pertaining to the Administration and Enforcement of the Colorado Noxious Weed Act (8 CCR 1206-2), areas that have List B species that are designated for elimination may apply for funding to help implement the

statewide noxious weed management plans for these species. For the List B component of any project attempting to address both List A and List B species, projects should emphasize intensive eradication efforts on outlying populations. Of lesser priority is control of List B species that involve containment efforts along clearly determined lines, and control of new or established populations along travel corridors and other areas of human disturbance in regions designated for suppression.

<u>Prevention and Education</u>. Projects meeting either of the first two criteria may include a prevention and/or education component. An education or outreach component should be a part of all projects, but projects that focus on education and/or outreach only will not be funded.

Other List B Species. Applicants are encouraged to submit projects that may not include List A species or populations of List B species subject to elimination in the subject county or counties. These projects must make significant progress managing List B species, effectively shrinking containment areas and/or treating smaller, outlying populations in a comprehensive manner. While these species are a lower priority, such projects may be funded or partially funded if WMF funds remain after allocations are made to higher priority projects.

Other Ranking Criteria

- Projects having specific, measurable objectives and outcomes are a high priority. In order
 for CDA to continue to receive WMF resources, we must be able to demonstrate to
 funders that the allocated funds were put to good use. The more that projects can state
 exactly what they're going to do with the funds; how the project couldn't be done without
 these funds; and how your noxious weed situation has improved because of the project,
 the more likely it is that we can continue to receive funds for disbursement to local
 noxious weed management activities.
- Partnership projects are important as they should make funding go farther, particularly in
 cases where equipment and/or personnel can be shared. Partnerships are also a great way
 to disseminate technical and non-technical information about noxious weed management
 and control.
- Management approaches including integrated weed management (IWM) and working within a watershed scale are also valued priorities. Projects that have analyzed the use of an array of tools, then decided to use the most effective approach, shows funders that their resources are being invested well.
- Weed funds should stimulate new weed management efforts by adding management capacity at the local, regional, and state levels. Applications that initiate cooperative and coordinated weed management programs or projects will be favored over well-established projects of a similar nature. Some examples include start up weed management projects for local governments that do not have weed management programs, or newly-forming Cooperative Weed Management Areas or Weed Prevention Areas that will address noxious weed issues on a regional level.
- Preference will be given to applicants that secure some form of assurance that participating landowners will continue to manage noxious weeds in a coordinated and effective fashion once state funds have been exhausted. Applicants should clearly

describe the desired outcomes of proposed management projects and the degree to which landowners have committed their future participation to achieve this outcome.

NEW THIS YEAR! List B Pilot Projects

In 2013, up to ten percent of the total CDA Weed Management Fund will be dedicated to supporting "pilot" or "demonstration" projects that propose a comprehensive, innovative approach to managing one or more List B species. This will amount to one project funded at \$20,000 to \$25,000, or two or more projects sharing that amount.

These projects will develop and implement a long-term, integrated plan proposal that will serve as a model for local entities in future years. Project examples may include:

- Using a biocontrol agent for a large infestation of a species, while employing chemical or mechanical tools or grazing for outlying smaller populations;
- Using targeted grazing to weaken or reduce the size of an infestation, and then following up with mechanical or chemical treatment; or
- Establishing a "weed prevention area" to protect valuable natural areas, wildlife habitat or agricultural lands, using integrated means.

Please discuss your project ideas with Steve Ryder prior to submitting a proposal.

Requirements:

- 1. The geographic area must be significant either a county, definable region, or watershed. Projects should have two or more partners (such as two or more counties working at the watershed level).
- 2. It is likely that these projects will take more than 1-2 years, usually longer. Funding can only be guaranteed on a year-to-year basis, so success in the first year will keep it a higher priority for funding in subsequent years.
- 3. An integrated weed management plan must be submitted, which includes:
 - a. Description and map(s) of the geographical area;
 - b. Long-term goal(s) of the project describe the area at the conclusion of a successful project. Will it be more valuable for agriculture, wildlife habitat and/or recreation? How so?
 - c. Current conditions of the geographic area what is standing in the way of a healthy landscape? Be specific what plants are being targeted, what are their characteristics of invasiveness, and how will you reduce their numbers or eradicate them?
 - d. Maps of targeted infestations if no maps exist; it's possible that a first year grant may include funds for mapping, given the overall importance of the project.
 - e. Short-term objectives of specific treatments timed over the full term of the project. For a three-year eradication project, the first year work plan should

- consist of specifics, while years two and three can be broader and contingent upon outcomes in previous year/s.
- f. What is the likelihood of re-infestation of the area in future years? Describe the potential causes of re-infestation (e.g., soil seed reserve, key vectors, current land management techniques). How can the possibility of re-infestation be reduced?
- 4. A 1:1 minimum match a lower requirement than for other Weed Fund grants.
- 5. <u>A separate application form</u> must be used if you are also applying for a standard Weed Fund or SPF grant.
- 6. Projects must employ an integrated approach, with at least two of the major treatment strategies used in concert.

Eligibility

- 1. Local governing entities must be in substantial compliance with the state Noxious Weed Act. Please contact Steve Ryder if you have questions about this.
- 2. Within the proposed geographical area, all List A plant populations must be treated in 2013, and all List B populations subject to eradication must be actively managed.
- 3. Any eligible entity may apply for a List B Pilot project in addition to applying for a standard Weed Fund and/or State and Private Forestry grant.

Requirements for all projects

- Award letters or e-mails will be sent to grant recipients as soon as selections are made.
 These notices are for informational and project planning purposes only, and do not
 establish an agreement between CDA and grant recipients. A purchase order (or contract,
 for a non-governmental entity), statement of work, and reimbursement form will be sent
 to recipients approximately a month after award letters are received.
- Prior to reimbursement, applicants must provide updated species distribution information to the state's quarter-quad mapping system, or to the local county weed manager if unable to access the system directly. This information includes the species that were targeted by the project (List A or B), and any sightings or other information on Watch List species encountered during the field season.
- The amount of the grant that can be used for administrative/overhead purposes is limited. For grant amounts of \$10,000 or less, the maximum amount of administrative expenses is ten percent; above \$10,000, administrative expenses cannot exceed five percent of the awarded grant amount. Administrative expenses must be directly related to the management of the grant applicant or partner salaries are not administrative expenses and are not eligible grant expenses, although they may be used as in-kind match (Exceptions may be considered for new weed management programs or for first-time applicants.). Hiring of seasonal employees for on-the-ground weed control work is not an administrative expense, but it is an eligible grant expense.
- Grant recipients are required to contribute a 2-for-1 match (1:1 match for List B pilot projects), which may be in the form of cash and/or in-kind expenses. If the final matching amount is reduced from the original amount proposed, the final grant reimbursement will not exceed one-half of the match amount provided.

For example, if the grant amount is \$5,000, the minimum matching amount is \$10,000 for a total project amount of \$15,000. If the final report shows a final matching amount of \$8,000, the final grant reimbursement will not exceed \$4,000. Eligible matching expenses may include direct expenditure of applicant and/or partner funds for necessary project costs, including contracted professional services, minor equipment purchases, equipment rental, and/or in-kind staff support and services (including salary and volunteer time) necessary to complete project tasks.

- Grant funds are distributed as reimbursement only, at the completion of the project following final approval by CDA.
- A final project completion report must be submitted to CDA upon completion of the project, but no later than the contracted date of expiration. A final report form will be provided to grant recipients.

AWARD PROCESS

Applications will be accepted until 5 p.m. on February 22, 2013. Until this time, the State Weed Coordinator will be available to advise potential applicants on the preparation of applications. Applications will be reviewed by an evaluation team and ranked on merit against other proposals. Applicants may be contacted by a member of the evaluation team during the evaluation process if additional information or clarification of existing information is required. Final selection of projects and grant amounts will be made by the Commissioner of Agriculture. Every effort will be made to ensure that awards from the Fund are made equitably and distributed broadly around the state provided that proposals of sufficient quality are available from all areas of the state. An announcement of award decisions will be made in writing or via e-mail by March 22, 2013.

<u>Project activities funded by these grants must take place within the period specified in the CDA</u> purchase order or contract.

<u>Additional information</u> may be included or required with each application. For example, local government weed management plans, intergovernmental agreements among partners, and an outline of the project's timeline and objectives will be helpful in presenting a detailed picture of the project and its participants to the evaluation team.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS FOR STATE WEED FUND GRANTS AND LIST B PILOT PROJECT PROPOSALS

All project applications must be typed. Application packets must contain the following: A project abstract, a map (or maps) of the proposed project area(s), a completed 2013 Project Application form (included in this RFP), and the 2013 Budget and In-kind itemization forms. Submissions must be made as described in the application instructions. Proposals must be received no later than **February 22, 2013 at 5:00 p.m.** to Steve Ryder at steve.ryder@state.co.us.

Please arrange your application materials in the following order:

- 1. Project abstract
- 2. Map(s) of proposed project area(s)
- 3. Project application form
- 4. In-kind itemization worksheet
- 5. Budget form.

<u>Project Abstract</u>: The project abstract (<u>one page maximum</u>) describes the proposed project (background, description of project, specific management goals and objectives and timeline) and demonstrates that it is an efficient and effective means of achieving effective noxious weed control.

Maps: Attach a detailed map or maps that depict the lands on which management will be carried out. A vicinity map of the project area and specific site area maps (as needed) are preferred. Maps should be no larger than 8 ½" x 11".

<u>Project Application</u>: See fillable application form provided separately. The fill-in blanks will expand and there is no word limit. Please be concise yet complete with your responses.

<u>Budget</u>: A budget form is provided separately. Please review the example sheet before filling out the form, and if you have questions please contact CDA. On the budget form, please list expenses <u>in priority order</u>. Doing so will ensure that if your project receives partial funding, you will receive your highest-priority funds. <u>For List B pilot project proposals</u>, <u>please submit one budget form per year of the project</u>. The Year 1 budget must be specific; out-year budgets can be somewhat more general.

Budget Form Instructions:

- 1. Please review the example sheet before filling out the blank form, and if you have any questions, please contact CDA.
- 2. Itemize your prioritized expenses for the project down the left-hand side of the table, and then list from which source the expenses will be paid. The summary of expended funds across the bottom of the table should indicate the total grant amount being requested, and the total matching funds from the various sources that the applicant and partner/s will be expending.
- 3. In-kind resources from applicant and partner/s can be listed here and then provided in more detail on the in-kind itemization worksheet.
- 4. On the form, the "proposed match" must be equal to or greater than the "required

minimum match."

<u>In-kind itemization worksheet</u>: This form is for detailing the in-kind resources that you listed on the budget form. In-kind resources include staff time, volunteer labor, donated equipment, etc. Give a dollar figure for each, and include specific item, hours of time or use (if applicable) and dollar value.

In-kind Itemization Worksheet Instructions:

- 1. Please review the example sheet before filling out the blank form, and if you have any questions, please contact CDA.
- 2. Your expenses should be listed down the left side of the table. Please provide specific information, as space permits.
- 3. Across the top of the table are rate (dollars/hour, cents/mile, etc.), the amount (miles, hours, etc.) and where the funds or in-kind comes from (applicant, partners). See the examples of volunteer hours and mileage.
- 4. All rates must fall into the acceptable parameters for federal and state grants.
- 5. Please keep all receipts and timesheets for your records (this includes volunteer timesheets). CDA will not request them unless they are needed to verify unusual expenses, or in the case of an audit.
- 6. The in-kind sums should also be inserted into the summary budget table.

Please submit all materials electronically, in a .pdf format (or Word/Excel document format if .pdf is not possible), to steve.ryder@state.co.us. This will save the applicant copying and mailing costs, and save the Department copying costs. Electronic signatures on the application form are allowed for Weed Fund grant applications. Applications will be accepted until 5 p.m., February 22, 2013.

For assistance with the application, please contact:

Steve Ryder

steve.ryder@state.co.us 303-239-4173 (office) 303-828-8329 (cell)